She wouldn't buy from Johnny any more, only Johnny's boss. After all, he could afford to be the boss, it was his Thing Store.

She wanted an ugly old buffet with half the veneer flaking off. To convert it into a china cabinet for her Rathskeller Clinic....

Romeo said they'd flip a coin for it. If it came up tails she had to pay him a hundred bucks for the dresser. Heads it was free. It came up heads. She was ecstatic. She embraced him.

She offered to decorate Romeo's French Grill. As soon as he decided to have one. She'd do it in Thing Street colors.

Johnny imagined psychotropic orange and black.

Halloween every day....

The customers wearing the lurid rags he sold them. Blending right in....

The waiters in skimpy sailor-suits. On the tables bowls of free condoms, for the kids. For the parents, crack.

*****

God rain....

Sharpshanks took it for a sign. Things were looking up, or would be soon....

He was, right now....

Not to mention, those shares he had in Whoresell. They'd soon be worth something. So he lived it up. At the Coffee Slime. At Piece-A-Piece-A. The sky was the limit. Unfortunately, it was low on the horizon. No sense over-doing things....

Then he was broke again. Even Johnny Boy's big rebate, used up. He'd been so expansive. Told Johnny, take ten percent. At least! While the god rain fell. Hours ago. Only, it seemed years....

Chinga, Jose said in the window, helplessly watching his favorite black ironstone coffee mug plummet into the upturned face of the otherwise prostrate bum three stories below, on pigeon-shat Thing Street....

Sharpshanks clutched his head, muttered an imprecation.

A plea to J. Zeus Murphy for a bigger hard-drive? One that wouldn't crash? Or was it a prayer to God to forgive him for his ingratitude, his unbelief?

Because, now, he believed in God, too.

Chinga, Jose repeated. Life was one big accident.

Carelessness!

He'd repaired the air-conditioner only that morning, to stop the condensation. Now the sidewalk was wet again. With coffee.

God rain.

*****

Babyface Marjoram's new bath-tub was full of empties and cigarette butts, but he refused to clean it out. He told his worker that it was their job. He got very worked up about it in the store. Even if he felt like doing it, the cleaning was unionized and he wasn't going to cross the line.